

Message Text

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SUBJ GENERAL ELECTION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

REF HALIFAX 294

PREMIER RICHARD HATFIELD AND THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES (PC) RECEIVED FRESH MANDATE IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION OF NOVEMBER 18, 1974. IN THE 58 SEAT LEGISLATURE THE PC IMPROVED ITS MAJORITY BY ONE AND NOW HOLD 33 SEATS AS COMPARED TO 25 FOR THE LIBERAL PARTY.

THIS, THE 27TH GENERAL ELECTION IN NEW BRUNSWICK, WAS THE FIRST TIME PERSONS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 21 COULD VOTE IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION AND IS THE FIRST SINCE THE CREATION OF NEW SINGLE-MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES IN THE PROVINCE. THE NEW RIDINGS GENERALLY ARE SMALLER THAN THE OLD AND LOCAL ISSUES AND CANDIDATES TOOK ON NEW IMPORTANCE IN SEVERAL CONSTITUENCIES. THE CAMPAIGN LACKED MAJOR ISSUES. THERE WAS NO DOMINANT ISSUE BUT ECONOMIC GROWTH, SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND ENGLISH-FRENCH RELATIONS ALL PLAYED A ROLE. THE PC STRESSED ITS RECORD AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROVINCE WHILE THE LIBERALS PLAYED UP THEIR POLICIES AND CONCERN

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FOR THE INDIVIDUAL. BOTH PLEDGED TO PHASE OUT THE

PROVINCIAL PROPERTY TAX, THE PC IN 4 YEARS, THE LIBERALS IN 3. BOTH PARTIES OFFERED ROADBUILDING PROGRAMS ALTHOUGH THE PC PROGRAM WAS MORE EXTENSIVE. BOTH OFFERED PHARMACARE PROGRAMS FOR THE ELDERLY AND, IN DIFFERING DEGREES, BOTH PROPOSED ENCOURAGEMENT TO FARMERS, FISHERMEN, AND INDUSTRY. THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES WERE OF EMPHASIS. THE PC WAS MORE DETAILED, MORE SPECIFIC AND FOCUSED ON MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES, THE LIBERALS REFLECTED TO A GREATER DEGREE AN ATTITUDE OF IDEALS AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CHALLENGE.

NO OTHER PARTIES WILL BE REPRESENTED IN THE NEW LEGISLATIVE SESSION. THE NDP, LED BY ALBERT RICHARDSON, WAGED ITS BIGGEST PROVINCIAL EFFORT IN HOPE OF SCORING A BREAKTHROUGH--IT HAS NEVER ELECTED A MEMBER--RAN 35 CANDIDATES. FRENCH CANADIANS, LARGELY CONCENTRATED ALONG THE NORTH SHORE AND FORMING ABOUT A THIRD OF NEW BRUNSWICK'S POPULATION, DID NOT GIVE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT TO THE PARTI ACADIEN AND NONE OF ITS 13 CANDIDATES WERE ELECTED. HOWEVER, THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN OF SUPPORT FOR THE LIBERALS WAS DISRUPTED AS THE PC WON SEATS IN THE AREA. THE FOUR CANADA PARTY CANDIDATES WERE SHOWN ON THE BALLOT AS INDEPENDENTS SINCE THE ELECTIONS ACT REQUIRES AT LEAST 10 MEMBERS BE RUNNING IN ORDER TO HAVE PARTY AFFILIATION LISTED. SEVEN OTHER INDEPENDENTS ALSO RAN.

ALTHOUGH THE RELATIVE STANDINGS REMAIN THE SAME IN THE LEGISLATURE THERE WAS SOME SEAT TRADING. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WAS THE PC GAIN OF SEATS ALONG THE NORTH SHORE WHERE THEY SUCCEEDED IN TAKING ACADIAN VOTES THAT WERE TRADITIONALLY LIBERAL. SOME CREDIT FOR THIS GAIN MUST BE GIVEN TO THE DIVISIVE EFFECTS OF THE PARTI ACADIEN. THE LIBERALS, IN TURN, MADE SOME INROADS INTO PC STRONGHOLDS, TAKING SEATS IN SAINT JOHN AND MONCTON.

SINCE THERE WAS NO CLEAR CALL FOR CHANGE PREMIER HATFIELD'S GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE ALONG
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PATHS PREVIOUSLY DEFINED. TWO OF HIS CABINET FAILED TO HOLD THEIR SEATS AND MUST BE REPLACED AND MINISTERIAL POSITIONS REASSIGNED. IT IS LIKELY THAT HE WILL ATTEMPT TO BEEF UP HIS CABINET BY BRINGING AN ACADIAN INTO IT AND, AT THE SAME TIME, MAKE FIRM HIS GAINS ON THE NORTH SHORE. PAVLOVSKI

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